



Dominic Perrottet MP
Premier of New South Wales

Ref: A5123871

Ms Helen Minnican
Clerk of the Legislative Assembly
NSW Legislative Assembly
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Helen
Dear Ms Minnican,

Attached is the NSW Government's response to the Final Report of the Legislative Assembly Public Accounts Committee's Examination of Auditor-General's performance audit reports February 2019 - July 2019.

The enclosed response notes the recommendations made by the Committee.

Yours sincerely,


Dominic Perrottet MP
Premier

20/10/21

Response to the Inquiry's recommendations

Recommendation	NSW Government Response
<p>1. The Committee recommends that Corrective Services NSW continues with the progressive installation of Audio-Visual Link suites across correctional centres in NSW and monitors and reports on their usage as part of a full evaluation of their effectiveness.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Through the Prison Bed Capacity Program (2016-2021), Corrective Services NSW (CSNSW) installed 276 new audio-visual link (AVL) suites in correctional centres across the state, representing a 360% increase in AVL capacity across the corrections network. The effectiveness of the additional AVL capacity has been monitored and reported via the Prison Bed Capacity Program Benefits Realisation process. The use of AVL for inmate appearances in court and before the State Parole Authority has increased by 48%, and the use of AVL for interviews conducted by professionals has increased by 300%.</p> <p>It is noted that the AVL environment has been extremely beneficial, and AVL use has grown significantly with the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent suspension of in-person visits. The increased number of available AVL suites has contributed to CSNSW's ability to facilitate family video visits, which on weekly average, now provide more contact to family and friends than in-person visits.</p>
<p>2. The Committee recommends that the Department of Communities and Justice provides a comprehensive response to the Audit recommendation addressing its strategic objectives for accommodating long-term growth in the prison populations in the context of broader criminal justice reforms, and investing in the delivery of these objectives.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>The NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (BOCSAR) forecasts indicate that NSW will require 5,000 additional prison beds by 2034, with demand expected to exceed supply by 2025. Government considered a Strategic Business Case for an Outer Sydney Metropolitan Corrections Precinct in 2017, and endorsed the need to invest in additional prison infrastructure in the Greater Sydney area to meet the forecast service need. CSNSW was requested to proceed with a Final Business Case and prepare appropriate strategic investment options for Government consideration, once suitable sites had been identified.</p> <p>Since the endorsement of the Strategic Business Case in 2017, more than 600 sites have been assessed for potential land acquisition for a corrections precinct. CSNSW has engaged the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) to undertake preliminary site due diligence for three identified sites, to determine feasibility. These activities have informed the analysis of options for inclusion in a Final Business Case, which will consider the relative merits of all options, including social and economic impacts and benefits realisation.</p> <p>The Final Business Case will provide Government with strategic investment options that will enable the state to meet forecast prison population demand and support improved community safety, security and reducing reoffending outcomes.</p> <p>Current prison population forecasts incorporate changes to population growth due to COVID-19 and demand reduction strategies approved by Government, consistent with the average level of reform activity as in historical growth rates. Changes to population growth and current demand reduction strategies are not expected to reduce prison population significantly enough to impact on forecast capacity requirements.</p>

Recommendation	NSW Government Response
<p>3. The Committee recommends that the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment provides a progress report on the independent evaluation of the draft Native Vegetation Regulation maps. The report should detail a timeline for when the draft maps, Category 1 – Exempt and Category 2 – Regulated land are expected to receive Government approval and be released to landholders and the public.</p>	<p>Noted Elton Consulting was commissioned jointly by the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment’s Environment, Energy and Science Group and Local Land Services to conduct an independent evaluation, and a final report has been received.</p> <p>The project delivered 123 NVR Map review packages, covering 825,000 hectares. Elton Consulting found no systemic issues requiring a change to the NVR map method. The net result of change following the map reviews was 2.3 per cent of the total area reviewed.</p> <p>The Department is reviewing the evaluation and considering potential next steps.</p>
<p>4. The Committee recommends that the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment provides more information on the planned 2021 changes to assist staff in recording and tracking investigations and manage workflows, including how the planned changes will improve case management and reporting systems.</p>	<p>Noted Enhancements made to the compliance case management system in 2021 include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates to Outcome management processes • Update to Prioritisation Assessment tools • Improvements to case management and case status features • Release of compliance interagency information tool. <p>Reporting improvements implemented in 2021 include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Release of a compliance program PowerBI report that provides current data on caseloads, case flow, staffing and outcomes • Release of Early Change Monitoring program PowerBI report that provides current data on detections, assessments and area of NSW monitored.